

DRAFT

“Whatsupstream” and Puget Sound

- “Whatsupstream.com” is part of a public outreach and education project developed by the Swinomish Indian Tribal Community, a sub-award recipient of an EPA grant to the Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission.
- Over the five years of this sub award, the Swinomish Tribe was eligible for up to \$570,000
- The project’s intent, consistent with the goals of the funding program, is to protect salmon by implementing an element of the Skagit Chinook Recovery Plan, an important part of the Puget Sound Action Agenda, and a high priority of the tribe. (**Outreach and education???**)
- Our understanding is that initially \$XXXXXX of the Swinomish award was to be used to develop the “What’s Upstream” website and campaign.
- Our regional staff became aware last year that the tribe’s “What’s Upstream” website was going to be more accusational than educational, and they weren’t comfortable with its tone.
- Our staff and attorneys were able to get the tribe to make substantial changes to the public-engagement parts of the website that would have violated the Anti-Lobbying Act
- However, because we were not the direct grantor with direct oversight, we had no legal leverage to prohibit the tribe from doing what they’ve done because, while it’s not productive or consistent with the collaborative efforts we fund and encourage, it’s not illegal.
- We were in a very difficult position.
- When we recently learned of bus ads, radio ads and billboards, and saw the website as part of the larger campaign, we were disappointed and frustrated, and we communicated with the tribe and the Fisheries Commission, which is responsible for oversight.
- The conversations we’ve had with the tribe and the Commission have been productive -- bus ads were pulled weeks ago by the transit agency, the billboards are down, the radio ads have stopped, and the tribe has returned all taxpayer funding that went toward this campaign.

- This is the right outcome, and we have been working with the Fisheries Commission, as the direct grantee, on improving its oversight of federal funds.
- Not only is it imperative that the letter of the law be adhered to, but so too should all recipients of federal funds be mindful of the spirit of the law, and spirit of problem solving that these funds represent.
- After all, Puget Sound won't be recovered through antipathy and vilification of this interest or that.
- EPA recognizes the major role of farms in the Puget Sound region and the important leadership demonstrated by regional agricultural stewards.
- To be clear, the agricultural community in Washington will be the first to admit that there is a lot of work ahead in improving farm practices to help Puget Sound.
- And that's why we work everyday with the ag community to encourage better practices based on better science.
- Those practices get implemented through collaboration – period.
- The funds Congress appropriates for these efforts are inherently marked with the understanding and expectation that they will be used to bring people together to solve problems.
- **Insert ag-related funding examples here**
- This collaborative ethos is part of the Puget Sound Action Agenda that the EPA, USDA, the Corps NOAA and the Fish & Wildlife Service have helped develop and implement.
- This has been a mess, we've gotten it cleaned up and we've engaged with our grantees to ensure that this kind of unproductive effort doesn't happen again.